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Guess Who's in Charge of Guarding U.S. Nuclear Power & Weapon Sites?

By Michael Collins Piper

American supporters of Israel were delighted to learn that an Israeli company, Magal Security Systems, owned in part by the government of Israel, is in charge of security for the most sensitive nuclear power and weapons storage facilities in the United States.

The largest perimeter security company in the world, Magal started out as a division of Israeli Aircraft Industries (IAI), which was owned in part by the government of Israel. In recent years, however, Magal evolved into a publicly traded company, although IAI (and thus the government of Israel) still holds a substantial share in the highly successful firm.

What this means is that the government of Israel will have control over the security of America's nuclear weapons.

Supporters of Israel say that this is a splendid idea, since Israel is said to be America's closest ally. However, there are some critics who question the propriety of America's supersensitive nuclear security being in the hands of any foreign nation, particularly Israel, which, even today, officially refuses to confirm or deny that it has nuclear arms.

Magal's global interests are broad. Having secured 90 percent of Israel's borders through a wide array of "space age" technology, Magal has now branched out internationally. Not only does Magal provide security for American nuclear facilities, but it also patrols most major nuclear facilities in Western Europe and Asia.

The Israeli firm guards Chicago's O'Hare Airport and, for the last 15 years, has kept watch on the queen of England's famed Buckingham Palace in London. And Magal safeguards 90 percent of the American prisons that utilize electronic systems.

Magal brags that its other clients around the globe include: borders, airports, industrial sites, communication centers, military installations, correctional facilities, government agencies, VIP estates and residences, commercial buildings and storage yards. There is hardly a major country or major enterprise that does not have Magal's security specialists keeping a close watch on their activities.

Clearly, Magal is no small enterprise. While 27 percent of its total sales are in the Israeli market, its largest market is in North America, which currently accounts for 35 percent of its sales.

However, Magal's American outreach is expected to increase substantially, especially now that the firm has set up a Washington office, which will promote its products to federal agencies and to the members of Congress, who provide funding for federally supervised security projects across the country at all levels: local, state and national.

Current U.S. Homeland Security Czar Michael Chertoff is not only a devout supporter of Israel but is also the son of a woman who has strong Israeli ties — even including service with El Al, the national airline of Israel. Magal, owned in part by Israeli Aircraft Industries, will be the clear-cut favorite in the eyes of officials in Washington who have the power to grant lucrative security contracts.

At the moment, Magal has four U.S.-based subsidiaries: two in California, Stellar Security Products, Inc. and Perimeter Products Inc., as well as the New York-based Smart Interactive Systems, Inc., and the Virginia-based Dominion Wireless, Inc.

All told, the Israeli company holds a 40 percent share in the worldwide market in perimeter intrusion detection systems and is working to expand its business in the protection of oil pipelines.

Magal is also said to be interested in guarding water lines around the globe, particularly in the United States. In fact, Magal may have an inside shot at getting a monopoly in guarding America's water supplies.

On July 19, the Bush administration's Environmental Protection Agency announced a "partnership" with the Israeli Ministry of National Infrastructures to improve what they called "water supply system security in the United States and Israel." Since Magal is so highly respected in Israel, it's an even bet that Magal will soon be guarding the U.S. water supply.

Photograph of military personnel manning a check point with a Three Mile Island cooling tower in the background.

CHANGES: In 2003, U.S. military personnel guarded the front gate of the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant located in Middletown, Pa. That may change, however, as an Israeli firm begins to take over security operations for nuclear facilities around the United States.

A journalist specializing in media critique, Michael Collins Piper is the author of ***Final Judgment***, the controversial "underground bestseller" documenting the collaboration of Israeli intelligence in the assassination of John F. Kennedy. He is also the author of ***The High Priests of War***, ***The New Jerusalem***, ***The Judas Goats***, and ***Dirty Secrets***, all available from America First Books and First Amendment Books. He has lectured on suppressed topics in places as diverse as Malaysia, Japan, Canada, Russia and Abu Dhabi.